Restless Sleeper

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Restless Sleeper

by laurelofthestory

Summary

One of Taiga Country's famous snowstorms leaves Molly and Sylvie trapped at Giovanni's house overnight.

Unfortunately, Sylvie neglected to inform the others of one of the weirder side-effects of his epithet.

Notes

Ah, Epithet Erased. Something I've *started* writing a number of things for, but never posted. Luckily, Prison of Plastic has kicked me hard in the butt to write things for it, especially since *someone's* going to have to make Sylvie content if Jello probably isn't going to give him any more.

This fic in particular mostly happened because of a friend suggesting that Sylvie sleepwalks along the lines of that one person on Tiktok, which I thought was a hilarious idea, and fitting given his epithet.

The whole thing had, of course, been Molly's idea. Without her involvement, prodigy psychologist and lexicologist Dr. Sylvester Ashling would not be caught dead in the house of semi-wanted criminal Giovanni Potage–-nor would Giovanni allow *Sylvie* to be caught in his house, dead or otherwise.

Molly had proposed this as what she'd called a "team-building" exercise to help them all grow closer, but it was really just an excuse to hang out, have dinner, and watch movies. Privately, Sylvie was fairly certain that this had originally been a Giovanni-Molly hangout session, and he'd been an afterthought. But it wasn't like he cared that much that he'd been *invited* to something.

He was invited to *lots* of things!

Mostly by his uncle.

Mostly holiday get-togethers.

That he would rather clean the underside of Giovanni's shoe with a toothbrush than attend.

"Sylvie?"

A small elbow pokes into his side, and Sylvie startles to attention, taking a sharp breath. He glances over to see Molly peering up at him from her seat next to him on the couch, clearly concerned.

"Yes?"

"Oh, uh…" Molly looks away awkwardly. "You've just kind of been staring into your popcorn box for two minutes. Are you okay? Do you want a refill?"

Sylvie squints down into the tacky striped plastic box, long since inhabited only by the couple of unpopped kernels he hadn't gotten to chewing on yet. Upon glancing up at the movie (some animated kids' thing he wouldn't *dream* of watching by himself, but that Giovanni and Molly seemed pretty excited about), he noticed he had, in fact, missed a decent portion of it. The evil army of smart-appliances had been defeated when he wasn't looking. Not that he'd been *interested* in something so immature, of course.

"...Oh. No, I'm okay, I just zoned out."

It was a bit more than just 'zoning out', and happened more than he cared to admit, but Sylvie decided it wasn't worth getting into right then. At least this time it hadn't happened mid-conversation.

Speaking of conversation, with Sylvie now returned to the world of the living, he can faintly hear Giovanni's muffled, obnoxious voice coming from the kitchen. He glances off in that direction, then toward the window. The sun had long since set–-technically, they were meant to have stopped after one movie, but one of Taiga's signature snowstorms insisted on making

itself known on that particular day, and Sylvie could swear it was coming down harder than when he'd last checked, a sheet of white catching the reflected light from the TV set.

Molly pauses the movie (and, he notices, taps rewind a couple of times). Sylvie takes the opportunity to speak up. "Where's Potage?"

"Giovanni," Molly scolds. "And he got a call from his mom."

"MOM!"

As if on cue, a horrible shriek emanates from the kitchen, causing Sylvie and Molly to jump in their seats. Giovanni soon follows after the noise, clomping into the room like an irritable giraffe and pouting *fiercely.*

"What do you *mean?"* Giovanni starts aggressively pacing around behind the couch. "I told you I was having a *friend* over!" His grating annoyance switches on a dime to fondness. "Yeah, it's the bear kid! She's doing great. Oh,, and I guess she brought a friend of *hers* too, but-–" The anger returns in full force. "You couldn't have thought of the *snow* before *taking* the *car?!*...Well I'm not making them *walk* back! Molly's 12 and her friend's, like, a stick with dandruff."

Molly wisely thinks to grab Sylvie by the wrist before he can rise from the couch. Sylvie sinks back down and settles on silently grinding his teeth, his stomach sinking with the dawning dread that he knows what the phone call is about.

"Mm-hmm? Yeah, yeah. I guess. Sure." Giovanni glances conspiratorially around the room, before cupping his hand around the phone. *"Iloveyoutoomommy,* okay, bye." Giovanni ends the call and lets the phone fall to his side, just standing there with his shoulders hunched like a caveman for a moment before he lets out a long-suffering, throaty groan of frustration, sagging almost to the floor with his palms to the sky in a dramatic display of annoyance.

"What's going on?" Molly asks, turning around and peeking over the back of the couch at him.

Another, only slightly less dramatic groan. Giovanni waves the phone in the air. "They just closed the road and Mom's stuck at Debbie's until it's open again."

Just what Sylvie had been afraid of. His fists clench.

"What about your other mom?"

"Ma's at a '*health and wellness'* convention on the other side of the country." Giovanni pauses, putting a finger to his chin. "...Actually, she told me there was some kind of presentation on the health benefits of different kinds of soup going on there so I guess it's not *totally* cringey. But still!"

Sylvie abruptly stands from the couch, dusting off his hoodie. "I'm walking home."

Giovanni's gaze snaps to him, and he wiggles his hands dismissively. "Uh, no you're not. You'll get buried."

“I can go as Beefton, it’s fine.”

Molly wrings her hands. “But what if you run out of stamina? Then you’ll be passed out in the snow…” Her eyes narrow in consideration. “Can you even sleep in that kind of cold?”

“Trust me, *that* isn’t the problem with that plan.” But, unfortunately, Sylvie has to concede that she’s right. His apartment building is a ten-minute drive, but likely impossible to walk to in the ever-worsening snow. “So what’re you suggesting?”

“I’m suggesting *sleepover!* If you even know what that is…”

“I *know* what a *sleepover* is.” Not that he’d ever *been* to one, of course, but he’d read about them. At least Molly seems pleased with the idea, smiling faintly. Sylvie crosses his arms. “I had a *client* tomorrow.”

“And I was supposed to be on morning shift…” Molly pulls her cell phone out of her pocket, staring at it glumly.

Giovanni scoffs. “Your dumb family can *deal,* Beartrap! Besides, you think any of your customers or *‘clients’* are getting *anywhere* in *this?”* He gestures at the window and shakes his head. “It’ll be great! We’ll stay up watching scary movies–-or, no, wouldn’t want to scar Beartrap, or the nerd-–but we’ll stay up until we all pass out and then I can make breakfast in the morning, it’ll be great!”

“I work with nightmares. Movies don’t scare me.” Surprisingly, it’s truthful–-but really, the fact of the matter is that the idea of having to stay overnight at *Giovanni’s* house makes Sylvie’s stomach twist in knots, and he can’t tell whether it’s due to anxiety or anger. He supposes he wouldn’t like staying over at *anyone’s* house unplanned, but especially *this* one.

“Uh-huh. I definitely believe that.” Giovanni puts his hands on his hips, building himself into a heroic (or, Sylvie supposes he’d call it *villainous)* pose. “All right, then! Operation Sleepover may now *commence!* Beartrap! You get the cool racecar bed! I get the couch! Pointdexter, uhhh, you get the floor *next* to the cool racecar bed, if you want, I’ll pull out some blankets.”

“Can’t one of us use your mom’s room?”

“There’s *carpet* in there. If you wanna know what cigs and incense smell like mixed together, be my guest.” Giovanni pulls a face and gives a full-body shudder. “Until then, I’m getting pillows.”

Giovanni proceeds to scramble up the stairs with all the grace of a particularly leggy deer attempting to walk through a children’s playhouse. Sylvie watches him go, then turns back to put his face in his hands as despair settles in.

He feels Molly patting his arm. “It’s okay, Sylvie. I’m gonna call my dad. Or…*try* to.” He hates the resigned, disappointed way she says it, but now isn’t the time to get into her family issues. “After that I can let you call your office people or something?”

Sylvie peeks out from between his fingers, glancing at the sheet of white out the window, then at Molly. He lets out a heavy sigh. There's no way he's going out in that, and Giovanni seems set on the 'sleepover' idea. He may as well try to reconcile himself with it. "...Yeah. That'd help. Thanks, Molly."

The couch had been stiff when Giovanni was young, but after being worn down by his moms, himself, and a litany of Roughouses over the years, it had been broken into something comfortably saggy and pretty nice to sleep on. And since it was the *family* couch, it regularly got the Family Smells cleaned out of it, unlike his moms' room. Suffice it to say, Giovanni was comfortable there wrapped up in his Ma's cat-print quilt, even if he had to tuck his legs a bit to not stick out over the edge.

Operation Sleepover had gone over pretty well, a low-key affair mostly consisting of movies and junky snacks, with a brief break to build a pillow fort upstairs that even Sylvie had seemed to enjoy. The two kids definitely worked too much for their own good, though, and had turned in early--the last Giovanni had seen of them, Molly had been curled into a tiny, adorable ball on his racecar bed, and Sylvie had been lying on a veritable nest of blankets in the fort, one of the fluffier ones bunched up and hugged to his chest in a way Sylvie would certainly deny in the morning.

The snowstorm outside was slowly beginning to settle down, and the house is at peace.

Until Giovanni hears a faint *thump* from upstairs.

Giovanni's eyes fly open and he sits up, turning his head towards the stairway. Had that been Molly? Was she okay? He's hesitant to call out just in case she was asleep and he's simply hearing things…

Footsteps, down the upstairs hallway and then onto the stairs. They're too heavy to be Molly's, and Giovanni would bet money that she would've muted herself even to do something as small as getting a drink of water, because she was just *like* that.

Sure enough, he catches sight of Sylvie heading downstairs, though he seems somewhat *off*. He's holding out one hand to his side, not *quite* reaching the railing and just sort of hanging in the air. More odd than that is his walk--he'd stomp one foot rather heavily onto the next step below him, then pause for several seconds, do the same with the other foot, pause again, and repeat, all while staring straight down at his feet, making coming downstairs an unnecessarily long and awkward-looking process. He'd slept in his clothes minus the jacket, that part wasn't strange, but as he continues his slow trek downward, Giovanni notices Sylvie seems to be missing his glasses, making his eyes look uncomfortably small and his face out of proportion.

"Yoyo?" Despite Sylvie's protests, Giovanni's still been trying to come up with a codename for him.

Sylvie stops and raises his head, *finally* at the base of the stairs. To Giovanni's surprise, Sylvie doesn't make a quip about the nickname, instead staring blankly in Giovanni's direction for an *uncomfortable* length of time.

“Mh.” Sylvie makes a sort of non-committal grunting noise, before stumbling off towards the kitchen.

Giovanni’s brows furrow, and he quickly throws the quilt off of him and gets to his feet, following after Sylvie. Something's *definitely* wrong, here, and despite their mutual distaste for each other, Giovanni *refused* to let one of his boys (even an honorary, reluctant one who had not yet accepted his inevitable recruitment-slash-adoption) get hurt on his watch.

He finds Sylvie resting his hands on the kitchen counter, staring very intently at the wall. “Doc?” No response. Is it the name? “Sylvester? Sylvie? *‘Doctor Ashling?’”* Giovanni makes sure to put all of his sarcasm into that last one, but still nothing. “Hey! Is something wrong with you? I mean, more than usual?"

“You have to-–hhhhave to–-to unnerstand,” Sylvie says, voice slurred as he walks over to the sink and turns the tap on. “S’not like I–-like I…” Giovanni wants for him to continue, growing more confused by the second, but he simply trails off and sticks his hand under the stream of water. A faint golden glow manifests itself near his feet, drawing Giovanni’s gaze to the floor, and one of Sylvie’s sheep (with a tiny little pompadour that Giovanni *refuses* to admit is actually kind of adorable) pops into existence, watching him intently.

“Uhhh…buddy? You good?” Still no response. Giovanni steps towards the counter next to Sylvie, squinting down at the sheep. “Is he good?” The sheep bleats. Giovanni, unfortunately, does not speak sheep.

Giovanni leans over to get a better look at Sylvie’s face. Sylvie appears to be studying the sink with an intense but glassy-eyed gaze, a deep frown on his face like he’s pondering the mysteries of the universe, or which Pokemon starter to pick. Giovanni experimentally waves a hand in front of Sylvie’s face, but Sylvie doesn’t seem to notice, abruptly turning off the sink and attempting to stick his hand in his mouth. There’s the faintest flicker of orange in his irises before he turns away.

Everything clicks.

Giovanni groans loudly. “You couldn’t have *told* us you *sleepwalk?!”*

“S-simple, really,” Sylvie says, but doesn’t elaborate beyond that. He starts walking through the kitchen, his sheep nudging him away from kicking into the island (is it *protecting* him?)

Giovanni’s face tightens like balloon skin as he silently panics. He’s never dealt with this kind of thing before–-Trixie’s *talked* in their sleep when she’s slept over a couple of times, but never *gotten out of bed and started running a damn marathon across his house.* He vaguely remembers hearing that you aren’t supposed to wake up a sleepwalker because it’s dangerous, but he doesn’t actually remember *why* that is. Will it damage Sylvie’s brain or something? Make his epithet freak out?

He hears Sylvie stop and rushes out to follow him, only to find him standing in the center of the living room with his shoulders hunched. “Ach, y-ye can’t expect t’fool,” Sylvie begins in a horrible attempt at a Scottish accent, before practically yelling, *"DOCTOR BEEEEEEFTON.”*

Giovanni quickly covers his mouth to try and stifle a snort, while also thanking his lucky stars that Sylvie's power in question isn't actually activating. Still, the yell was rather loud, and Giovanni chances a look up the stairs before going to try and redirect Sylvie away before he trips over the couch. The guardian sheep bleats at him. Giovanni still does not speak sheep.

Sylvie heads towards the door, prompting both Giovanni and the sheep to rush in front of him and stop him from walking flat out of the house. Thankfully, he doesn't protest, simply stumbling over toward one of the walls and nearly tripping on a CD rack before bending down and taking a disc case off of it. "Hey, hey, *hey!"* Giovanni crosses his arms. "You *do not* mess with ABBA."

Sylvie holds the album much too close to his face, then pushes it away and taps it with the back of his hand like a paper. "Pr–prrrrretty simple."

"Simple? *Don't you talk about the queens that way!"*

Sylvie promptly drops the disc, leaving Giovanni scrambling to catch it as Sylvie starts pacing around the room, muttering incoherently to himself. Giovanni sets the disc back on the rack and groans loudly, pulling at his own hair before rushing forward and grabbing Sylvie's shoulders, causing his gibberish chatter to immediately cut off.

"Giovanni?"

Giovanni's head whips around, hands still on Sylvie's shoulders. "Beartrap!"

Sure enough, she's peering over the railing, rubbing her eyes (and he does, in fact, notice a slight green glow surrounding her feet before it dissipates, does he know her well or *what?)* She had also decided to sleep in her clothes, though unlike Sylvie, she'd chosen to keep wearing her bear hoodie. He can't really blame her. It looks comfy.

"I heard noises." Molly hops down the rest of the stairs, startlingly quiet even without the silence bubble. "Is something wrong?" She squints into the dark of the living room. "Sylvie?"

"Sheep-for-brains over here decided to go on a midnight stroll. I think it's some kinda epithet thing?"

As if on cue, Sylvie starts aggressively flapping his hands, making an ever-growing agitated noise until Giovanni lets go of him and he smacks at the air in front of him. "N-nonono," he mumbles frantically, then starts pacing again.

Molly blinks. "Sleepwalking? I guess his epithet has to do with sleep or dreams or something, so it could be…"

"Wait, he didn't even tell *you* what it was?"

"No?"

"--we'll unpack that later, for now *help me."*

“Uhhhh, okay, okay!”

Molly rushes forward to cut Sylvie off, earning her a bleat from the guardian sheep (which she quietly apologizes to). Sylvie stops upon nearly running into her, staring at her with those unnervingly empty eyes.

“Sylvie? *Syyyylviiiie?*” Molly waves a hand in front of his face.

“Y-yeah?”

Molly’s face brightens. Maybe he can hear her! “Sylvie! It’s me, Molly! I don’t know what’s going on in your head right now, b-but you’re sleepwalking and you could get really hurt, so we need you to lie back down, okay?”

Sylvie rocks slightly on his heels, the sheep giving what Giovanni interprets as an encouraging ‘baa’. He merely stares at Molly for several seconds.

“Mmm…”

“Yes! Yes, it’s Molly!”

Sylvie whirls on a heel. *“Mouse Trap,”* he blurts out, lurching back towards the stairs.

Molly drags a hand down her face, letting out a resigned sigh. “I don’t think this is going to work.”

“Well, *something* has to! We can’t just keep chasing after him all night!”

“Uhh-–uhhhhh, okay-–”

Molly tugs on her hair in consternation as Sylvie’s sheep pushes him away from the stairs and Giovanni stops him from heading toward the front door again. Her face brightens.

“Oh! I’ve got an idea!” For a moment, Molly looks a little guilty, but her expression quickly sets. “Boss! Get ready to catch him!”

“Roger!”

Sylvie bursts into an unsettling fit of hysterical giggles as Molly rushes over, hesitating for just a moment before grabbing his wrist with both hands, closing her eyes and muttering a quiet “sorry”.

It takes a second for Giovanni to realize what she’s doing. Then, a shimmering green glow spreads over Sylvie’s body like a veil. His unnerving laughter slowly peters out, and his breathing deepens. His sheep pops out of existence with a startled bleat, and Giovanni reaches out just in time to catch Sylvie as he slumps over.

“Nice thinking, Beartrap.” Giovanni has to make a concerted effort to keep his voice down, but hopes she can hear the enthusiasm.

Molly lets go of Sylvie's arm, opening her eyes and smiling shyly. "Thanks…I figured that his brain was still probably going really fast, so I just kinda…dumbed him down a bit?"

Giovanni snorts. "Nerd could use it every now and then."

"Come on…"

"What's that?" Giovanni cocks his head, pointing to his ear with his free hand.

Molly huffs a slight laugh and stands up straight. "Don't be mean to Sylvie."

"That's more like it!"

Giovanni shifts Sylvie so he's lying more comfortably in his arms. Thankfully, the boy weighs about as much as a sleeve of saltines (was that all he ate? Giovanni wouldn't be surprised-–this kid *really* needed to learn the joys of junk food, within reason of course) so it's an easy matter to carry him to the couch and lay him down. After a moment's hesitation, Giovanni pulls the cat quilt over him, and seeing Sylvie curl into it like a kitten almost makes it all worth it.

"Okay." Giovanni stands straight, hands on his hips and glancing back over his shoulder to Molly. "Crisis averted."

Molly pumps a fist, before a nervous look crosses her face. "Someone should probably stay down here to make sure that doesn't happen again…"

"You're absolutely right."

"I can–-"

"Nnnnnope. No, no, no." Giovanni waggles a finger in her face. *"You* are going back up to Pillow Fort Cool Guy, and *you* are getting a good night's sleep. I'll take one for the team and watch the nerd."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive." Giovanni leans down, squeezing Molly's shoulder. "Honestly? I'm glad this storm hit, because you *both* need sleep more than anyone else I know. And I know *Dark Star 'I'm gonna drive ten miles out of town at butt o'clock in the morning to see the moon turn pink' Albireo."*

Molly giggles, but it quickly shifts into a big, adorable yawn. Giovanni stands and makes a scooting motion up the stairs, and Molly reluctantly nods, though gives him a big hug and lets him ruffle her hair before she leaves. Even without the bubble, she's almost as quiet as she was on the way down.

Giovanni sprawls into the recliner at one end of the coffee table in a heap of limbs, letting out a huge sigh as he does so before kicking up the footrest. He isn't particularly thrilled about playing night watch for Sylvie, but better him doing it than Molly. The recliner isn't so bad, anyway.

…Case in point, Giovanni is snoring loudly in a matter of minutes. Thankfully, Sylvie continues to sleep like a rock.

Sylvie wakes up slowly, clinging to the warm, comforting void between sleep and wakefulness. He curls into the corner of the couch, pulling the quilt tighter around himself-–

Wait. That's not right.

Sylvie immediately loses the delicate balancing act and plunges into awareness with the feeling that he'd been run over by a pack of wild horses, who had then backed up to run over him again. It's not an *unusual* way for him to wake up, with that unbearable *heaviness* that makes you wonder if you'll ever be able to get out of bed again, but he fights through it to open his eyes and try to figure out what had happened.

He finds himself staring into the back of what he recognizes as Giovanni's couch. With a groan, Sylvie turns to stare at the ceiling, where he can see sunlight filtering in, with the cool tinge indicating a layer of snow on the ground outside.

Hadn't he been in the pillow fort upstairs? And he doesn't recognize the quilt he's wrapped up in, patterned in stylized, somewhat unsettling but also kind of cute cat faces. With a herculean force of will, Sylvie hauls himself into a sitting position, stretching forward towards his feet like a cat before looking around.

Yep, he's definitely in Giovanni's living room. The sun is out, nearly blinding reflecting off last night's snow, and he can hear faint noises from the kitchen. How late is it…?

Sylvie catches light footsteps running from the kitchen and turns to see Molly standing in the doorway, wearing a hairnet that's only barely containing her frizz and a worn apron entirely too big for her. Her face brightens.

"Oh, hey! You're awake!"

"...Ahuh."

"I put your glasses on the table."

Sylvie blinks, then glances over–-sure enough, they're neatly folded on the coffee table next to him. He quickly slips them on, and a switch flips in his brain, rendering him somewhat more alert. "Thanks."

"Is Sheeping Beauty awake over there?" Giovanni leans over Molly's head around the doorframe, wearing a matching hairnet and apron (though his fits better, and his hair looks less likely to attempt a jailbreak at any moment).

Sylvie pouts at the nickname. "Yes. I thought *you* were sleeping on the couch."

"I was! But *noooooo."* Giovanni waves his hands in the air dramatically, one holding a spatula. *"Someone* figured *just plain old sleeping* was too *boring* for him."

“What? What are you–-”

It hits Sylvie in a rush. It had been one of the *reasons* he’d been so reluctant to sleep over, but had felt like a small concern compared to being in someone else’s house, not to mention the house of someone who held a mutual dislike for him. Sylvie groans loudly and presses the heels of both hands into his forehead.

“I didn’t think it would happennnnnn,” Sylvie whines, then turns to look at the staircase. “And I went down the *stairs* like that?!”

Giovanni laughs. “Yeah, you looked like a zombie. A tiny zombie that liked to yell in a really terrible accent.”

Sylvie’s face burns, and he fully hides behind his hands. He hears Giovanni cackle some more, before Molly shushes him, and when he cautiously peeks out from between his fingers, Molly’s giving him an apologetic smile.

“We didn’t know if we were supposed to wake you up, so I just kinda…used my epithet on you to get you to calm down and then we put you on the couch. Sorry about that…”

“It’s okay.” Sylvie sighs, shoulders sagging. “The ‘don’t wake up a sleepwalker’ thing is a myth. It’s still not a great idea because someone who’s sleepwalking is in very *deep* sleep and hard to wake up anyway, and they could freak out.”

Giovanni snaps his fingers. “I was wondering! ‘Cause I remember I read that on the internet and was like ‘hey, will that kill him, or will he beef out, or what’?”

Molly covers her mouth to hide an outburst of giggles. “It was actually kind of funny after it stopped being scary. And you had one of your sheep following you around, too!”

“Oh, yeah. I haven’t been able to figure out why that happens, but it’s probably some kind of subconscious self-preservation thing.”

“So, uh…” Giovanni frowns, one eyebrow raised. “Does that happen a lot, or…?”

Another sigh, as Sylvie rakes a hand through his hair. “Sometimes. My epithet causes certain sleep-related problems. I’m tired almost all the time.”

Giovanni makes a face. “Eugh, how do you live like that?”

“Caffeine, medicine–-plenty of people have narcolepsy.”

“Isn’t that the disease where you just pass out randomly?”

“Not *exactly.”*

“But *kind of* exactly!” Giovanni raises a finger in the air as if he’s just made a massive scientific discovery.

Sylvie rolls his eyes. *"Anyway,* the sleepwalking is usually only when I'm really stressed, I didn't think it was going to happen here…"

Molly steps over to the couch, setting her hands on the arm and nodding sympathetically. "It's okay! I was a little nervous staying here, too, and I've slept over with friends before."

Sylvie just nods. He had even less experience with this sort of thing than Molly did-–aside from the rare hotel, he'd barely ever spent the night anywhere he wasn't *living.* Parents' house, college dormitory, uncles' house, and then his apartment.

"Well, you two had better get used to it!" Giovanni puts his non-spatula hand on his hip, posing proudly. "One boy's house is *all the boys' houses!* As long as the parents are cool, I mean."

"Once again, I am *not* one of your *boys, Potage."*

"H-hey, boss!" Molly quickly turns to face him, pointing back into the kitchen. "How long was it supposed to be before you flipped that pancake…?"

Giovanni's cocky grin freezes on his face. A solid five seconds of silence pass, before Giovanni turns on a dime and skids back into the kitchen fast enough that Sylvie wouldn't have been surprised to smell burning rubber. Molly's shoulders shake as she tries to laugh quietly, before turning back to him.

"Giovanni and I made pancakes if you want. We would've let you help, but figured you needed the sleep."

"Thanks."

"And they said on the news they're gonna start clearing the roads soon!" Molly bounces on her toes, leaning on the couch arm. "We can play some board games after breakfast and then we can probably go home."

"Sounds good." Sylvie smiles, faint but genuine. "And, uh-–thanks for…putting up with me last night."

"Of course. We're friends, right?"

"Yeah…"

Sylvie's smile grows slightly as Molly hurries back into the kitchen. 'Friends' is still a new concept for him, and he still isn't sure how much he likes Giovanni being included in that category, but-–well, at least Giovanni had actually tried to help instead of just laughing at him the whole time, presumably.

In the past, he'd woken up unceremoniously sprawled on the floor or on his couch or sitting in his shower, despite his sheep's best efforts. Knowing someone else had looked out for him this time was…a nice change, he thinks.

At the very least, he doubts it'll happen again next time.

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